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Contrastive rhetoric: a study of Asian and American student complaint letter writing practices

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Contrastive rhetoric: A study of Asian and American student complaint letter
writing practices

by

Danelle Imm Baker

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English (Rhetoric, Composition and Professional Communication)

Major Professor: Helen Rothschild Ewald

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1997

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This is to certify that the Master's thesis of
Danelle Imm Baker
has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

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ABSTRACT

In this study, twenty-eight primarily Asian non-native speakers of English and thirty-two native speakers were asked to write the first paragraph of a complaint letter to three different bosses in order to measure the directness of their responses. It was hypothesized that Asian writers would exhibit less direct responses and that both groups would become progressively less direct when writing to less familiar readers. The results indicate that levels of directness were not vastly different across both groups according to word count before the claim in each letter, though non-native speakers used more indirect questions. Adjectival downtoners were found not to be a meaningful measure of directness, though non-native speakers used hesitating verbs more frequently than did native speakers. The study describes and identifies for future study the frequency of group messages, self-effacing strategies, appeals of legality, guilt, friendship and practicality in samples from both groups, and the number of respondents who chose not to shift their responses linguistically and rhetorically for different audiences.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rationale

In my first semester as a graduate teaching assistant, I taught a second-semester composition course with approximately one-half international students. In this particular course, I encountered a Malaysian engineering student whose native language was Chinese. While this student was polite, appeared to have strong grammatical ability in English and chose interesting topics for his writing assignments, he relied extensively on his sources, often devoting entire pages to quotation from sacred Chinese texts. I found that I consistently gave him average grades and wrote roughly the same comments on each paper. "Try to avoid using so much quotation. Consider the topic in your own words. Develop your argument further rather than relying so much on your sources!" Though my comments were consistent in their tone and purpose, I saw relatively little change in this student's writing throughout the semester.

After concluding the semester, issuing grades and beginning research for this study, I begin to consider this student and his rhetorical habits in a new light. What I might have once considered bad writing or lack of concern and interest in the material I was trying to teach could, in fact, have been a product of his "cultural baggage," the rhetorical practices he learned in his home country and hadn't yet forsaken in my American, midwestern, public university classroom. While I was required to uphold the same grading criteria and standards for this student as for all of the students in my classroom, I regret not engaging in a discussion with him about culturally-based rhetorical practices and how he might consider the nearly identical comments on his papers. Though I was in

the position of authority and the one to grade his work, he and I shared the same level of knowledge about writing practices in each other's cultures: very little.

While the scenario I just described is true, the focus of my study stretches beyond the classroom into the realm of the workplace, specifically, the genre of business writing. Business writing, largely ignored in the field of contrastive rhetoric, is crucial because it is a site of real-world interaction where items are bought and sold, where jobs are sought and found and where a sense of audience and context can have a crucial effect on the text's success in achieving a desired and very real goal. According to Ulla Connor, author of *Contrastive Rhetoric: cross-cultural aspects of second-language writing*, the field of contrastive rhetoric is suffering from a lack of study of business writing. "There is relatively little linguistically oriented research on business communication cross-culturally. Furthermore, the sparse literature on cross-cultural business communication has been disappointing" (137). Elizabeth Huettman, author of "Writing for Multiple Audiences: An Examination of Audience Concerns in a Hospital Consulting Firm" also bemoans the lack of research related to audience concerns, a necessary component of cross-cultural business writing research: "other researchers suggest that as business communication theorists we do not currently have sufficient empirical evidence or the appropriate language to describe the complexity involved in how professional writers make decisions about audience" (257). It is reasonable to conclude, then, that a cross-cultural study of business writing tasks with a focus on audience concerns could provide a valuable contribution to the field of contrastive rhetoric as well as the study of business writing.

In order to study the phenomena of contrastive rhetoric as it applies to business writing, I am utilizing the student population of Iowa State University, a large public midwestern university with a substantial international population.

Iowa State's cultural makeup as well as the wealth of information on Chinese rhetorical practices guided me toward the selection of Chinese (as well as Malaysian and Taiwanese) students as the international sample group for my study. Chinese rhetorical instruction, as I will further explore, endorses indirect, rather than direct communication of an argument or a request in writing. American rhetorical style, however, often advocates an early and direct statement of purpose in business writing, but frequently advises writers to base decisions on level of directness through an understanding of audience. I will later discuss these points when evaluating American business writing textbook samples.

Research Question

Because of these culturally-based notions of style, I have formulated a study with the following research question:

Do Asian L2 (second language) writers express complaints in business letters more indirectly than their American counterparts, with the level of indirectness increasing as the audience gradually becomes a more personally "distant" party, moving from acquaintance to stranger?

I explore this question with the aid of a survey to native and non-native English speaking college students, requesting biographical information as well as business letter writing samples. Students write the letters to three imagined readers: a boss they are acquainted with, a friend who has been promoted to the position of boss, the "most familiar" audience, and a boss they have never met, working in another location, the "least familiar" audience. To judge the level of indirectness in the samples, I perform a content analysis, tabulating the

frequency of the following rhetorical and linguistic features in both sample groups:

1. delayed request or statement of argument
2. indirect statement of argument (asking questions, using analogies)
3. use of qualifiers ("maybe", "very likely")

I have chosen to examine these areas because they are regarded as signs of indirect speech in the American rhetorical tradition, as I will further describe in the literature review. In addition to tabulating the frequencies of these features, I consider whether years of study of English and number of English courses completed are possibly factors influencing consideration of audience in my sample population.

Though Ilona Leki and Carolyn Matalene argue that it is potentially dangerous to generalize about cultures from writing practices, my survey attempts to avoid generalizations by requesting that students adjust their complaints for different audiences, from a familiar audience to a progressively distant audience. Thus, this study could bear implications for study of directness in both cultures. My research question hypothesizes that the more personally distant the audience is, the less direct writing samples will become. However, my results may not support this presumption, or may do so for only one culture.

Literature Review

The following four sections compose the literature review for this study. They include "The Study of Contrastive Rhetoric," "Intercultural Business Communication Research," "Audience Concerns," and "Asian Rhetorical Practices."

The Study of Contrastive Rhetoric

Though contrastive rhetoric is a broad area of study, a basic definition can establish common ground amongst researchers in the field. According to Grabe and Kaplan in "Writing in a Second Language: Contrastive Rhetoric," "contrastive rhetoric predicts that writers composing in different languages will produce rhetorically distinct texts, independent of other causal factors such as differences in processing, in age, in relative proficiency, in education, in topic, in task complexity, or in audience" (264). Ilona Leki adds to this definition when stating "[contrastive rhetoric] tak(es) the position that L1 [native language] writing skills are transferable and are transferred to L2 writing tasks . . ." (126).

Underscoring the fluidity of the definition of contrastive rhetoric, Connor in *Contrastive Rhetoric* describes the change of focus from spoken language to writing in the study of contrastive rhetoric. She states: "Reasons for this change are many: the increased understanding of language learners' needs to read and write in the target language; the enhanced interdisciplinary approach to studying second language acquisition through educational, rhetorical, and anthropological methods; and new trends in linguistics" (5). With this broad explanation, it is not surprising that contrastive rhetoric is regarded as a study still in its "formative stages" (15). However, as Connor states, this lack of definition is a positive feature because it allows for new avenues of research (7). Therefore, a multifaceted study such as mine can contribute to the developing field of contrastive rhetoric while not falling outside of narrow definitions.

Intercultural Business Communication Research

The relatively open definition of contrastive rhetoric has created new avenues for study, and judging by our now global economy, business

communication research is a timely and promising subject. While studies in contrastive rhetoric support that texts from ESL writers exhibit rhetorical differences when compared to texts written by their native English speaking counterparts, they also call for further study of L1 and L2 out-of-classroom writing to examine cultural influence. In "The Role of Cultural Awareness in Contrastive Rhetoric," a contrastive rhetoric study of Japanese and American letter writing styles, Kamimura and Oi assert that more attention should be given to "pragmatic perspectives" such as professional writing because previous studies have focused primarily on expository writing (2). Kamimura and Oi conclude that cultural awareness enables greater proficiency in letter writing; Japanese students with higher levels of cultural awareness "behaved closest to the writing pattern of the native speakers of English" (16).

Literature in the field supports teaching international communication to enhance business relations and to help students encounter their own ethnocentrism. Because many business writing courses neglect or brush over international communication, students may be left to make cultural generalizations about communicative styles. In arguing for teaching international business communication, Robert Haight asserts that letters are a fine method for students to understand cultural assumptions. In reference to audience, he states "The formulas for presenting positive, negative, persuasive and mixed information are then seen as relative to audiences themselves, not as rules that must be followed but as guidelines that must be constantly questioned for applicability within a certain discourse community" (7). Haight suggests that students learn other cultures' rhetorical patterns first, followed by detailed audience analysis.

Connor also notes the lack of research on business writing tasks. She argues that most of the current literature on cross-cultural business communication is "in the form of opinions and anecdotes rather than findings based on empirical evidence" (137). In terms of conceptions of audience, Connor cites a 1987 study by Jenkins and Hinds where Japanese, English and French business letter writing genres were studied. While American English letters are "reader oriented" and French letters are "writer oriented," the Japanese style is called "non-person oriented" and "fram(ing) the communication in terms of the relationship between people rather than in terms of the people" (138). In Connor's report of Yli-Jokipii's study of 525 letters, she states American letters were more explicit in their requests than British and Finnish letters, supporting that American letters are a good source for comparison to letters from a rhetorical tradition that stresses indirectness.

Audience Concerns

Because of the nature of my student survey, it is necessary to explore audience concerns as they relate to business writing. Research on the writing process in workplaces as well as corpus-based research of business writing samples indicate that conceptions of audience reflect the writer's level of experience and knowledge of the audience. Brenda Sims and Stephen Guice, authors of "Differences Between Business Letters From Native and Non-Native Speakers of English" studied 214 request letters for application information to the University of North Texas English department. Sims and Guice compared 105 letters by native speakers of English to 109 letter by non-native speakers in the following areas: grammatical errors, salutations and complimentary closings, tone, type of information, and letter length.

Of the five areas, tone and type of information, the subjects of greatest interest to this study were points of substantial rhetorical difference in the two sample groups. The researchers concluded that non-native speaker samples showed a high rate of exaggerated politeness strategies, frequently using such phrases as "very grateful," "kindly," and "if it is not too inconvenient" (30). Further, non-native speakers offered more personal and professional background information than did native speakers and more frequently made "inappropriate" requests for assistance or evaluation. Sims and Guice conclude that native speakers more closely followed standard U.S. business communication practices in business letters (in this case, a request for college information) than did non-native speakers, likely because non-native speakers had misunderstandings about their audience. In sum, the two conclude "the non-native speakers seemed to misunderstand the expectations of their readers and the context in which their letters would be received to a much greater degree than did the native speakers" (36).

It is logical to conclude from Sims and Guice's study, then, that familiarity with audience culture and conventions can guide all writers in making context and audience-appropriate rhetorical choices. Using Ede and Lunsford's theory of "audience addressed and audience evoked," Joseph S. Bocchi, author of "Forming Constructs of Audience: Convention, Conflict, and Conversation" studied how engineers and architects addressed or invoked audiences. Through interviews, reviews of writing samples and observations, Bocchi found that institutional conventions, specifically the workplace culture as determined through workplace conversation, determined textual choices over disciplinary or situational conventions. According to Bocchi, "The community's approach to posing problems of audience analysis informs the writer's constructs of the

situational audience and the textual choices the writer makes during the problem-solving process of writing" (170).

A similar case study of workplace writing underscores the notion that current audience theories are too simplistic for describing the complex processes writers undergo when considering a variety of audiences for their texts. Maddy, the subject for Elizabeth Huettman's case study in "Writing for Multiple Audiences," considered both the internal and external audiences for the real estate feasibility reports she was responsible to write. Also incorporating Ede and Lunsford's theory, Huettman reports that Maddy carefully considered her internal audience when specific sections of her text were written to satisfy them, while she "envisioned a generic reader, one who was based on an organizational role" when considering her external audience, the audience invoked (269). Much like Sims and Guice and Bocchi's study, however, Huettman's study indicates that Maddy was successful in invoking audience because she knew through experience how her external audience would react to the text, and thus could make an appropriate "generic" conception. Maddy, therefore, was a successful writer because of her careful understanding of audience and context.

Asian Rhetorical Practices

Because a writer's sense of audience is conveyed through his or her linguistic choices, it is necessary to understand the rhetorical habits of both of the sample groups in my study. While American business writing textbooks communicate the qualities of "good" business letters, a review of Chinese rhetorical practices is necessary to understand why Chinese writers communicate as they do in the context of predominant American rhetorical practices.

Much research on Chinese rhetorical practices is focused on three particularly areas: the prevalence of indirectness, a heavy emphasis on quotation, and restriction of personal opinions. Matalene and Wong have studied the Chinese educational system and how the stress placed on memorization and deference to authority encourages Chinese writers to rely on traditional, widely known phrases in writing rather than to seek originality. Matalene argues that indirection is successful in Chinese culture because writers can rely on readers to share "communal, tacit knowledge", thus implying that Chinese writing is writer-centered.

In a review of literature on the quality of indirectness in Chinese writing, Connor frequently refers to the "eight-legged essay" as a rhetorical structure that profoundly affected Chinese communication styles. The eight-legged essay was used as part of Chinese civil service examinations for approximately five centuries, until the early twentieth century. The structure for the eight-legged essay came from Chinese classics, *Four Books* and the *Five Classics*, and enforced the maintenance of social harmony by conveying Confucian values. Connor describes the importance of the eight-legged essay in instilling Chinese values: "Government officers needed to prove their skills in social harmony through the writing of the eight-legged essay, which did not allow for much individual self-expression, considered socially harmful" (Connor 37).

In fact, several writers reinforce that indirectness in Chinese writing is a product of Chinese culture, namely educational and religious institutions. However, Scollon and Wong-Scollon in "Topic Confusion in English-Asian Discourse" attributes this quality to a "different view of self" in Chinese culture, a result of Confucianism and a different understanding of individualism. Scollon and Wong-Scollon discuss the importance of vertical social relations in

Confucian thought and state "in virtually any imaginable pair of speakers, one is thought to be higher, however slightly, and the other lower by the same degree" (117). According to the authors, two types of social relationships determine social relationships in Asian culture, "inside" and "outside" relationships. Inside relationships are relationships between family members, teachers and students, and coworkers. Outside relationships are temporary contacts one may have with a member of the service industry such as a waitress or a clerk. In inside relationships, the person with the higher position, specifically the one who is older or has more authority, determines the length of time to introduce a topic in conversation though he or she is obligated to show sensitivity to the needs of the "lower" member. A boss/employee relationship as the one participants in the survey are asked to imagine would be an outside relationship, where the boss would have the authority to determine the length and type of communication.

Connor's earlier statement about self-expression as well as many that composition instructors make about the importance of originality and creativity in writing imply that Chinese rhetorical traits are somehow inferior to those of American and other western cultures. Wong in "Contrastive Rhetoric: An Exploration of Proverbial References in Chinese Student L1 and L2 Writing" explores this assumed inequity in rhetorical styles and examines, in a study of her own, the presence of set phrases in Chinese writing. Wong performed a corpus-based study of three Chinese graduate student texts and evaluated them for set phrases in L1 (native language) written discourse and L2 (second language) oral and written discourse. While her study supports Kaplan's conclusion that there are, in fact, culturally distinct ways of communicating, she argues that set phrases serve a purpose in Chinese culture and appear inferior only because they are being viewed and translated through an American lens.

Gaunjun Cai, author of "Beyond 'Bad Writing': Teaching English Composition to Chinese ESL Students" supports Wong's claim that Chinese rhetorical habits are shaped by Chinese political culture and that Chinese writers (when writing in English) are often labeled as bad writers. "English compositions by Chinese ESL students have consistently shown evidence of . . . a restricted expression of personal feelings and views, an indirect approach to the chosen topic, and a preference for prescribed, formulaic language, all of which are so unfamiliar to native English-speaking instructors that they mistakenly perceive these students as 'poor writers'" (9).

In a similar discussion of Chinese writers' tendencies to approach issues indirectly, Taylor and Chen in "Linguistic, Cultural, and Subcultural Issues in Contrastive Discourse Analysis: Anglo-American and Chinese Scientific Texts" conclude that Chinese scientists elaborate less than American writers, provide fewer details, and appear to avoid critical discussions of issues in scientific writing. While Taylor and Chen's study focused on a different genre of writing, the similar conclusions about Asian rhetorical practices are noteworthy.

Textbook Reviews

The following review of business writing textbooks and linguistics texts adds rhetorical and linguistic support to the design of my research question. The sections are entitled "American Business Writing Traits," and "Linguistic Markers of Directness."

American Business Writing Traits

The American business writing textbooks reviewed for this study simplify approaches according to direct and indirect organizational styles. Paul V.

Anderson, author of *Business Communication: An Audience-Centered Approach*, reports that direct style, where the main point is made early in the document, is generally the most effective pattern. In the text's chapter 11, "Beginning A Communication," Anderson defines five guidelines "that will help you begin your business communications in ways that will get the responses you want from your audience" (332). He supports guideline 2, "State Your Main Point" with three arguments for stating the main point early in documents: 1) the writer is able to tell the reader what he/she wants the reader to know quickly, 2) the reader is more likely to notice and remember the main point, and 3) the reader will pay more attention to the remainder of the document if he/she understands the purpose at the onset.

However, Anderson later argues that the context and purpose of the document should be the strongest determinant of the style. He describes how to choose the most appropriate style with the following statement: "you stand the best chance of getting your audience to the desired destination if they are open to the points you make, willing to take each one according to its merits. However, if you make the wrong first step, your audience can become uncooperative . . ." (253). Anderson advises the direct approach when the writer is certain that the audience will respond positively to the message. However, an indirect approach, when the document's main point is expressed later, may be more suitable when the message is considered negative or unwelcome. Furthermore, an indirect approach may be suitable when the message is contrary to or violates the audience's expectations.

If judging organizational styles only by Anderson's standards, a business writing student would likely come to the conclusion that a complaint letter such as the model used in this study should include an indirect organizational style

because it expresses bad news by criticizing management's decisions. While Anderson doesn't explicitly address complaint letters, *Business Communication*, another American business writing text by Helen Rothschild Ewald and Rebecca Burnett, does. Ewald and Burnett cite two ways to structure a complaint letter: a deductive "direct request" method and an inductive "problem-solving" approach (265). The deductive method, as with Anderson's direct style, calls for a direct opening, stating the main point, an explanation of the circumstances that provide the ground for the complaint, and an "inclusion of the warrant," which explains why a claim should be acted on (265). This approach is most commonly used when appealing to the audience's sense of logic.

The inductive approach is a spin on the deductive approach, where the opening is indirect with the purpose of establishing common ground. The opening is followed by an explanation of circumstances and a description of a solution. Three additional sections follow, namely showing the "advantages outweigh the disadvantages," summarizing additional benefits, and providing an action close (266). The authors claim that this style will appeal to readers' emotions by anticipating and quelling negative responses.

Courtland Bovée and John Thill in *Business Communication Today* echo Ewald and Burnett's discussion of direct and indirect organizational styles. They agree that the writer should determine the appropriate style through an analysis of the communicative situation and the audience's likely response. Bovée and Thill add that a letter in direct style is easier to write -- it is straightforward and doesn't require creative wording. Bovée and Thill do give specific advice about when to state the main point when writing in direct organizational style. They say "state what you want in the first sentence or two and let the explanation follow this initial request" (143). In addition, introductions and other politeness

strategies are a mistake when placed before the main point because they are likely to only distract the reader from the purpose of the document.

Again, in tandem with Ewald and Burnett, Bovée and Thill report that a "bad news" message or one that the audience will likely resist is better phrased in indirect style. By sandwiching bad news within positive statements, the audience is more likely to walk away with a positive feeling.

Bovée and Thill address complaint letters, though they call them "persuasive claims and requests for adjustment" because persuasion rather than complaining is the true goal of the document (247). While they don't explicitly advise writers to write in a direct or indirect organizational style when writing persuasive claims, their comments on an in-text writing sample offer some guidance. They comment: "a hostile and haughty tone invites the reader to square off as an adversary. Instead, the writer should establish some common ground" (248). From this statement, one can ascertain that Bovée and Thill advise some level of indirectness when writing a persuasive claim or request for adjustment.

Clearly, none of the texts provide hard and fast answers for choosing direct versus indirect rhetorical styles. Ultimately, the decision lies with the writer and how he or she reads the communicative situation. The literature reviewed for this study indicates that direct style is more common and easier to write, though indirect style may be the most prudent in a complaint situation like the one portrayed in the survey. Thus, my survey is designed to shed light on whether cultural background plays a role in determining a writer's choice of level of directness and corresponding organizational styles.

Linguistic Markers of Directness

As previously discussed on page three, my assessment of the student writing samples begins with level of directness, particularly how early in the first paragraph (if at all) the writer makes a statement of his or her point. Beyond this rhetorical feature, I am also assessing two linguistic features, 1) level of directness in phrasing the point, i.e. whether a statement is asked in the form of a question, whether analogies are used, and 2) use of qualifiers such as "maybe" or "very likely".

Levels of directness in phrasing the point of a document are particularly of concern when considering that the survey in this study requests that students imagine three different readers for their letters. Though all are in a position of authority over the writer-as-employee, two stand out. The first scenario states "Assume that you have met your boss but don't know him well," and the third states "assume you have never met your boss and that his office is in another location." Because the writer of both letters is communicating displeasure with a policy, it is natural to assume that he or she would want to convey deference to authority, or politeness.

According to Edward Finegan, author of *Language: its structure and use*, indirect speech acts are a prime way to show politeness to the listener/reader. Finegan provides the following example: "Questions such as *Can you shut the window?* are perceived as more polite and less intrusive and abrasive than a command such as *Shut the window!*". He further goes on to state: "One message that indirect speech acts can convey is 'I am being polite toward you'" (344).

Positive politeness, such as expressions of good will, are yet another example of showing respect for a listener/reader. Discussing both a rhetorical and linguistic feature, Finegan reports that beginning a conversation with a

greeting, such as "How are you?" shows attention to the reader or listener's needs to be treated with politeness (356). This politeness strategy is yet another mark of indirectness because such a greeting, intended to satisfy audience's needs, delays the speaker/writer from making his/her point.

In *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartvik, the authors support use of indirect questions as a politeness strategy. They describe questions as "polite equivalents of requests" and even underscore their appropriateness in formal situations. They use the highly formal example "Could I ask through you, Mr. Chairman, whether the secretary is thinking of the occasion under discussion?" and translate it to a non-interrogative far more direct form: "The Secretary has muddled the dates" (1477-78).

Another important way to convey indirectness in addition to indirect questions are qualifiers, labeled as "downtoners" by Quirk et al. As opposed to amplifying adverbs, downtoners "have a generally lowering effect, usually scaling downwards from an assumed norm" (445). Downtoners serve to weaken the strength of a message by downplaying or softening it. Examples of downtoners provided by Quirk et al. are as follows: "a bit, almost, fairly, nearly, quite, relatively, a little, barely, hardly, pretty, rather, and somewhat" (445). For the sake of brevity, the list taken directly from Quirk et al.'s Chapter 7, does not cover all of the categories of downtoners, namely approximators, compromisers, diminishers and minimizers.

To echo my research question in relationship to these rhetorical and linguistic features, I am hypothesizing that letter samples from Asian writers will show more evidence of indirectness, defined for the purposes of this study as a delayed main point or statement of purpose, greater use of indirect questions

and analogy, and greater use of downtoners. I also hypothesize that markers of indirectness will increase as the audience for the sample becomes more distant, with the most direct letter sample written to the friend promoted to the position of boss, the most familiar audience, and the least direct written to the boss who the writer has never met, the least familiar audience.

While the literature on Chinese rhetorical traits indicates that Chinese students writing in English will be less direct than their American counterparts and that business writing is an important area for contrastive rhetoric research, it is vitally important to test these hypotheses before resting on assumptions. In the next chapter, I discuss my methodology for exploring the previously identified research questions.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate my research question, I distributed the survey (see Appendix 1) to four Iowa State University classes: two English 101C classes, one Journalism (JLMC) 101 class, and one English 105H (Honors) class. English 101C, an advanced composition course for undergraduates, is composed entirely of second language speakers and must be completed for second language students to proceed to English 104 and 105. Journalism 101 is an introductory level journalism course that must be completed before proceeding to higher level courses in the department and also fulfills a liberal arts requirement for non-majors. Lastly, English 105 is the last semester of required composition courses for Iowa State University students. Students in English 105H have bypassed English 104 with a high ACT verbal score and class rank.

All classes participating in the survey were selected through convenience sampling. Because of the limited number of courses held during the summer session, a convenience sample became a reasonable and possibly the only option. Convenience sampling, using participants who are immediately available, is a valid method because a random sample would very likely yield instructors who were not able to devote classtime to the study and because the classes themselves contained a random selection of students in terms of language ability and experience with business writing tasks. The 101C classes contained a majority of Asian students, an accurate representation of Iowa State's minority student population.

Survey Procedures

Prior to beginning the research, I obtained the Human Subjects Committee approval to conduct in-class surveys and to report on the results. To obtain a list of available classes, I reviewed the list of English 101C and 104 instructors and contacted the instructors via e-mail. The instructor teaching 101C quickly volunteered her class for the study.

Because English department policy does not allow any English 104 or 105 courses to devote classtime to participate in research not related to coursework, I was required to seek outside sources to conduct the rest of my survey. I was able to locate a Journalism 101 class as part of the native speaker sample group and then postponed the remaining research until the beginning of fall semester.

Surveying English 101C

English 101C and English 104/105 are under separate administrative authority, and thus I was given permission to use classtime to survey 101C students. I received approval to give the survey and then visited the 101C class. The instructor had informed me that the students had previously performed survey research themselves and thus were understanding of participant responsibilities. As she had mentioned the survey to the students prior to my visit, I briefly introduced myself, asked that they complete the survey, offered help answering questions and thanked them for their participation. I chose not to give any details other than those included on the modified consent form (precedes survey in Appendix 1) out of concern that I might influence the answers. I then proceeded to sit at the front of the room so that I would be available for any inquiries. I followed the above described procedure to introduce the survey to all four of the classes participating in the study.

The English 101C class contained 15 students, though only half arrived promptly and were able to begin the survey at the beginning of the hour. Because of tardiness and absences, I received only 12 completed surveys from this class.

To increase the non-native speaker sample size, I surveyed another 101C class at the beginning of fall semester. I also distributed the survey at the start of the class period, and all students arrived promptly. No additional surveys were left to be completed outside of class.

Surveying JLMC 101

Because of the difficulty in obtaining participants for an English 104 and 105 sample group over the summer, I contacted a Journalism faculty member who allowed me to use his class to conduct the survey. According to the professor, JLMC 101 "Mass Media and Society" typically contains students with a variety of majors and academic backgrounds.

I visited JLMC 101 shortly before the end of the hour to insure the presence of as many students as possible. The class contained approximately fourteen students, all of whom were present during the administration of the survey. The professor informed the class that they were not required to participate in the survey though they would receive an extra credit point towards their final exam if they chose to complete it. As a result, all fourteen students completed the survey in ten to fifteen minutes.

Surveying English 105H

Another English professor volunteered her English 105H class for my study at the start of fall semester. I also entered the class at the beginning of the

hour and received full participation. As with the Journalism 101 class, students in English 105 completed the survey in less time (approximately five minutes less) than the English 101C classes.

Survey Contents

The survey consisted of three separate sections preceded by a question on native/non-native speaker status. The first question directed non-native speakers to go to Section I prior to moving on to Section II. Section I asked participants to list their native language, number of years spent in the United States, and number of years of instruction in English. These questions were included to determine how many of the participants could in fact be classified as Asian and to what degree their exposure to American culture and fluency in English could be assumed. Section II asked participants to specify their major, the names of English courses completed in high school and college, to circle the last year of formal education completed (either the last year of high school or a year in college) and to circle the types of business letter writing the participant had done. The business letter writing options were as follows:

- writing to request college/university application information,
- writing to apply for jobs,
- writing to complain about a product or service,
- writing letters as part of a job task, and
- writing other business letters.

The last question offered two blanks for participants to specify types of business letter writing not identified in the bulleted list. The types of letters were

numbered one through five for the tabulation process, with one as "Writing to request college/university application information" and five "Writing other business letters" with space provided for examples. This section of the survey was intended to serve as a measure of experience -- students circling more letter writing options may be more likely to make appropriate audience-based choices in Section III. These letter types were identified as those most likely to be used by the average consumer or worker for business purposes, while also allowing blank space for types not identified in the list.

The second page, Section III, is the focus of this study. In this section, participants are asked to imagine themselves in the same situation, yet with three different audiences. The following scenario applies to all three questions: "Imagine that you work for a large company with five hundred employees. Your boss has decided to take away employees' morning and afternoon breaks. You are upset with his decision and decide to complain about it to him in a letter. Write the opening paragraph of such a letter." In the first example, the audience is defined with "Assume that you have met your boss but don't know him well." In the second, the scenario with the most familiar reader, the writer imagines the boss is a friend who has been promoted to his position, and in the third, the scenario with the least familiar reader, the writer has never met the boss and he/she works in another location. In the latter two scenarios, the writer/participant is asked to consider if he/she would make any changes, and if so, to rewrite "two sentences that would reflect these changes." I chose the same scenario but with slightly shifting audiences to highlight audience as the factor to be examined. The first scenario represents a standard boss/worker relationship, though the third is likely common in modern corporate settings where the individuals determining company policy are faceless to entry-level employees.

The second scenario poses an interesting dilemma for participants because it represents a conflict between friendship and professionalism and thus necessitates a different rhetorical approach.

Methodology for Assessing Samples

To assess whether non-native English speaking participants in this study were actually more indirect in expressing main points, I have tabulated the features discussed above as follows:

1. the point at which writers expressed the purpose of the communication according to word count,
2. the number of questions and analogies per entry, and
3. the number of downtoners per entry.

After counting the presence of each feature, I calculate percentages of each feature and then compare the percentages across the two groups, native and non-native speakers of English. This method allows me to assess levels of directness not only per scenario by determining how quickly participants made claims among the native and non-native speaking sample groups but also between groups. I also identify and count all downtoners (in all categories as specified on page 17) in the samples from both groups. I have chosen downtoners because they are a countable and easily identifiable variable of indirectness, a concern when reviewing sixty writing samples. In addition to ease of countability, they provide a good measure of a writer's effort to weaken the strength of his or her message, a sign of indirectness. I also consider additional findings that arise through the evaluation process and examine factors such as years of English instruction, last year of formal education completed, and amount of letter writing experience when they seem to influence the results.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The Participants

The participants in this study were divided into two groups: the non-native English speaking group, surveyed in 101C classes, and the native English speaking group, surveyed in a JLMC 101 class and an English 105H class. A total of 60 individuals participated, with 28 from the non-native speaker group and 32 from the native speaker group. Throughout the discussion of results, I will first present results from the non-native speaker group before going on to the native speaker results, unless otherwise mentioned.

The non-native speaker group was composed of a variety of ethnicities, as reported by their instructors. They include students from the following countries: Malaysia - 8, Indonesia - 7, Korea- 4, Japan - 2, Taiwan - 2, Thailand - 1, Vietnam - 1, Comoros Islands - 1, Uganda - 1, Sweden - 1. Because the Swedish student chose not to respond to the questions on page two and because the Ugandan student's responses indicate an incomplete understanding of the survey questions, the responses used for this study were the first 26, though the Ugandan student's responses were included as was possible. Thus, the non-native speaker group was almost completely Asian, with at least 10 students identifying themselves as native speakers of Chinese. The native speaker group included only students for whom English is the first language. (All data describing participants' ethnicities, language experience, majors, level of education and letter writing experience are in table form and appear in Appendix 2.)

The non-native speaker group reported spending the following number of years in the United States: 15 or 53% reported having been in the U.S. less than

one year, 8 or 28% reported being in the U.S. one to two years, 3 or 10.7% reported being in the U.S. two years or more, with four years as the longest, and 2 participants left the question blank. The group, however, spent substantially more time learning English. Only 1 reported spending less than a year (eight months, to be exact) learning English. The rest of the group had spent a minimum of 3 years and as many as 14 years learning English. Four participants reported having 3 to 5 years instruction in English, fifteen reported 5.5 to 9 years of instruction in English, and 5 reported 10 to 14 years of instruction. Three participants left the question blank.

The non-native speaker group had the following distribution of majors: 8 majored in either computer science or management information systems, 7 majored in an area of engineering, 6 majored in marketing, management or finance, 2 in architecture, 4 in miscellaneous majors, i.e. food science, psychology, etc., and 1 left the question blank. The native speaker group had 7 engineering majors, 5 English, speech communication or journalism majors, 4 computer science majors, including 1 double majoring in business, 3 psychology majors, 3 science majors, 3 history and philosophy majors, 3 arts-related majors, 2 education majors, 1 liberal arts major, and 1 undecided student. Majors in both groups were scattered widely enough to make them an unlikely factor in influencing results.

Thirteen of the 28 students or 46% in the non-native speaker group reported completing at least two English classes in high school/secondary school. Three reported over two to seven classes, while 8 either answered the question incorrectly (listed his or her high school's name rather than course titles) or did not answer the question at all. Not surprisingly, the native speaker group reported completing substantially more English classes, with only 8 of 32

students or 25% taking three classes or less. The remaining 75% of native speaker students reported completing between four and six English courses in high school. A full 70% of the latter group were enrolled in English 105H. As to be expected, native speakers had consistently completed more coursework in English.

The non-native speaker group included a variety of students in terms of last year of formal education completed, though the majority were either new first-year students or had just completed their first year. Of this group, 20 students or 71% were either beginning or had just completed their first year of college. Three students had just completed their sophomore year, 1 his or her junior year, and 3 their senior year, though at least 1 of the latter group gave other answers that placed doubt on whether this student correctly understood the question. One student left this question blank. In the native speaker group, a full 23 of the 32 students or 71% had just finished his or her senior year in high school. Two had just finished their sophomore year, 3 their junior year, and 4 their senior year. Thus, a full 71% of all students surveyed were either beginning their college career or had completed only one year in college, making the overall level of formal education roughly equivalent. For this reason, level of education is not likely to be a factor influencing results across the two groups.

In the category of types of letters written, 13 of the 28 students or 46.4% of the non-native speaker group reported writing only one type of letter specified in the survey. Seven participants (25%) reported writing two types of letters, while 8 (28.5%) reported writing three types. All students in this group answered the question, indicating all had written at least one type of letter specified on the survey. In the native speaker group, 5 students or 15.6% did not answer the question at all, indicating either failure to read the question correctly or lack of

experience writing any of the types of business letters specified. Six students or 18.7% reported having written one type of letter, while 10 students or 31% reported writing two types and 7 or 21% reported three. Four or 12.5% of students reported writing four or more types, including new types not already specified on the survey. While more of the non-native speakers reported writing business letters at all, native speakers surveyed had overall written more types of letters, with 33.5% of native speaker having written three or more types, compared to 28% writing three from the non-native speaker group.

Results from Letter Samples

To measure the first feature of directness specified in my research question, level of delay in stating the request or purpose for the document, I performed a word count on all letter samples, specifically counting the number of words prior to the writer's statement of purpose for the letter or his or her opinion about the elimination of breaks, essentially the claim. All word count measures are based on the number of words preceding the claim in each entry. For this feature, I performed a word count only on the letter sample following the first scenario because many students didn't provide letter samples for all three scenarios, or did so in a descriptive form, for example "I would give the second letter a friendly tone," rather than specifying changes in a countable form. When salutations were given, I included them in the word count as well, though the inclusion of this feature was minor, affecting the word count of each entry by two to three words.

In the non-native speaker group, 27 students provided a letter sample after the first scenario, with an average word count prior to the statement of the letter's purpose or claim of 19.48 words. However, the spread throughout this

particular group was quite large, with thirteen entries or 48% having a word count of fifteen or less, and six or 22% with a word count range of thirty-nine to sixty-two words (see Figure 1). Particularly direct entries with a very low word count began with lines such as "I am sorry to tell you that I am very upset with your decision on taking away employees' morning and afternoon breaks . . ." and "If you decide to take away our breaks, we assume we can't do very well on our job . . .". More indirect entries with a higher word count began with introductory sentences like "Dear Mr. Andrews, I'm just one of your employees that work for your company. I have met you before, but I think that you don't remember me." This particular entry, fifty-four words long, alludes to an important issue but never identifies it.

The native speaker group, as predicted, had an average lower word count before the claim was stated in the first scenario of 16.56 in thirty-two entries. Because the difference of 2.92 words before the claim per entry is not substantial, additional factors are necessary to consider to successfully evaluate the delayed request portion of the research question. As with the non-native speaker group, there was a significant spread in word count over the thirty-two entries. Twenty or 62% of the entries contained less than fifteen words before the claim, while seven or 21% had twenty-five words or more before the claim. Three responses in this group were particularly lengthy, with word counts of sixty-one, sixty-three and sixty-five before the claim. Particularly direct entries (according to the measure of word count) in this group include "I am writing this letter to inform you of my disapproval . . ." and "We the employees are very upset . . ."

However, word count alone is not necessarily a sign of directness. Many of the entries in both groups with low word counts are examples of delayed statements of argument. Of the thirteen samples with a word count of fifteen or

less in the non-native speaker group, five contained delayed arguments where the writers appear to be making a direct statement, yet delay the message. For example, 1 participant began his letter in a very direct fashion with "Dear Sir, this letter is to let you know" yet actually states his or her request at the end of the third sentence, thirty-nine words into the entry with "I representing the whole employees will like to request sir of removing this order." Thus, with my definition of directness as stating the purpose or request a maximum of fifteen words into the entry without a delayed message, only eight of the twenty-seven or 29.6% of the non-native speaker samples are direct according to this measure (see Figure 1).

Similarly, the native speaker group surveys contained ten examples of delayed starts from the fifteen-and-under word count category, 50% of this group. As with the non-native speaker group, letter samples in this group with delayed starts begin directly, yet do not offer a definitive claim until later in the passage, often fifteen or more words after the claim appeared to have begun. Though more letters by non-native speakers appeared direct but contained delayed starts, ultimately 31% of all letters in the native speaker group were direct by the measure of fifteen words or less before the claim (eliminating those with delayed starts) as compared to 29.6% in the non-native speaker group.

While the native speaker samples had a slightly lower average word count before the statement of claim (2.92 words less), a similar percentage of samples in both groups contained delayed starts. However, 62% of native speaker samples had fifteen or less words before the claim overall, compared to 48% in the non-native speaker group. Only slightly more (1.4% more) of native speaker samples

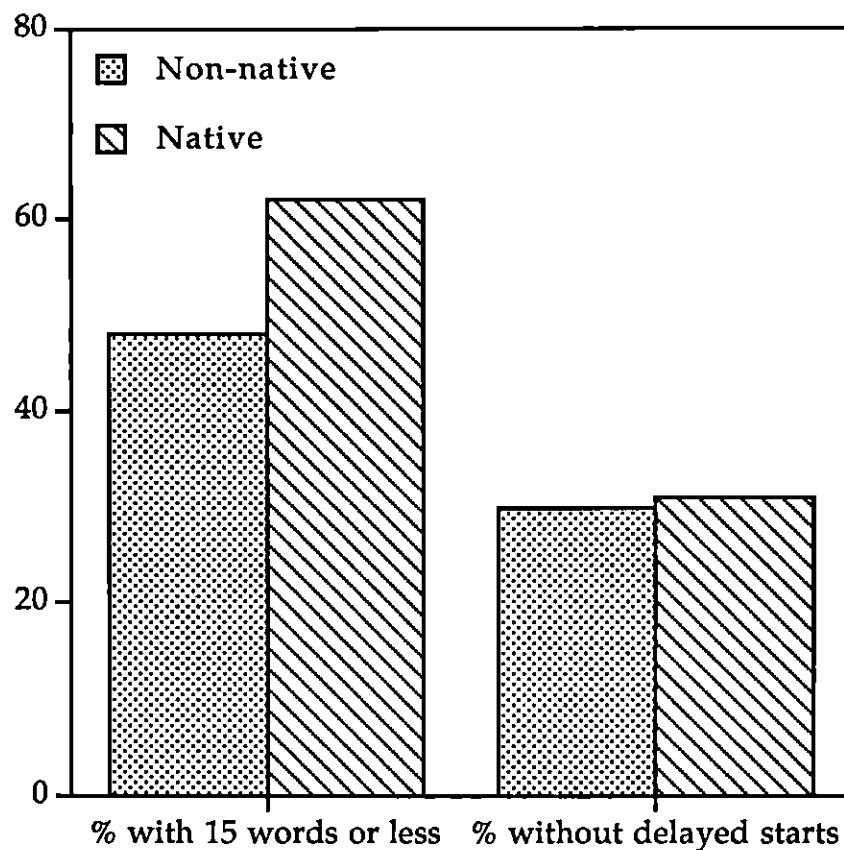


Figure 1. Percentage of direct responses in non-native and native speaker groups.

were truly direct according to this measure when samples with delayed starts were removed.

The second portion of my research question also hypothesized that letter samples would become more direct as the audience for the document became more familiar, or according to this methodology, that word count before the statement of purpose or claim would decrease when moving from the first audience, a boss the writer is acquainted with, to the most familiar audience, a friend who has been promoted to the position of boss. Because many participants simply said "no changes" or described changes rather than making

them in the second entry, I calculated the difference between the first and second entries when possible. The results indicate that in twelve of the twenty-seven entries in the non-native speaker group, word count decreased when moving from audience one to two, though in three of the twelve entries, the difference was negligible with the word counts differing only one to two words. However, 2 of the students who completed a letter for the most familiar audience appeared to not understand the connection between the three audiences, that a complaint letter was required for each. Thus, a substantial decrease occurred in nine or 35% of the twenty-five valid entries for this measure.

It is important to note that word count actually increased when moving from audience one to two in five or 20% of the samples in this group. Some of these samples indicate the writer's need to use politeness strategies, either congratulating the friend/boss on his or her promotion or letting the boss know that other employees dislike the change in policy. One student wrote "Hello John, I would like to give you some advice about the decision you have made for all of us . . ." while another congratulated the boss, followed by "I hope we still can help each other. We are still friends, right? Our friendship won't change even though now you are my boss." Though many students surveyed regarded communication with the friend/boss as an opportunity to be direct, 20% of all responses in this group indicate that some students felt the friendship with the boss was worth respecting or possibly cultivating and used politeness strategies accordingly.

In the native speaker group, sixteen or 50% of responses decreased when moving from the first to the most familiar audience, though two decreased by only a few words, making the difference negligible. Thus, only 43% can be said to have exhibited a true decrease in word count. In contrast, eight or 25% of the

entries experienced an increase in word count when moving from audience one to two, though one of the responses differed by only a few words. The remaining eight responses possessed either an identical number of words before the claim, or the participants did not answer the questions in a countable manner, instead describing the changes they would make. It is important to note that the longest entries prior to the claim in the letter to the first audience experienced the strongest decrease. For example, the three responses in the native speaker group with word counts above fifty decreased by nearly half. Examples include reductions from fifty-four to twenty-seven words, from sixty-one to thirty-eight words, and from sixty-three to thirty-two words. It appears that the native speakers who chose a highly indirect approach responding to the first audience saw the need for a change in the second. While these 3 students reported taking a large number of high school English classes (four, six and six, respectively), they reported experience writing only one to two letter types. However, many of the native speakers in English 105H, the class from which these 3 were drawn, took equally as many English courses and often reported more experience writing business letters. In this particularly circumstance, coursework completed in English and letter writing experience did not correlate with shifting directness for the audience.

Overall, word counts before the claim in the non-native speaker samples decreased and increased in response to the most familiar audience in fewer samples in comparison to the native speaker responses. For example, 35% of responses showed an increased word count over the second response, while 20% of all responses showed an increase over the second response. In the native speaker group, 43% showed a decrease in word count before the claim, while 25% showed an increase. While directness according to the measure of word count

before the claim appears to have a slightly inverse relationship to familiarity, it is not a strong one, as one-quarter and one-fifth of the entries increased in words before the claim in response to the more familiar audience.

Because of the large portion of participants who stated "no changes" or "same as number one" in the space for the response to the third reader, the least familiar audience, a word count comparing either of the first two samples to the third isn't feasible. However, this factor in itself is a sign that the level of indirectness did not increase when moving to the least familiar audience, and therefore, counters the portion of my research question that hypothesized indirectness would increase as audience familiarity decreased. I will further discuss this finding in the section entitled "Additional Findings."

Frequency of Questions

The frequency of questions in the non-native speaker group indicates that questions were a relatively common linguistic device for this group of participants. Eight of the twenty-seven or 29.6% of the surveys contained letter samples with questions, with one participant responding to the same scenario with two questions (see Figure 2). Six of the eight questions or 75% were asked in the second sample, the scenario with the familiar boss/friend audience. Not surprisingly, many of these questions were asked in a very casual tone, often questioning the boss' thinking. Examples include "Is that true that you are going to take away our break? Do you think that is the right thing to do?" to "How about you think again about that?" to "How could you think about such a foolish idea?" One participant used a question to remind the reader of their relationship with "We are still friends, right?" The student completed this paragraph with "However, can you re-think about take our breaks away. Most of us don't think

it's such good idea." Four of the 6 participants who used questions in responding to the second scenario either questioned the boss' judgment or expressed hostility, while the remaining 2 used questions to express politeness or friendship.

Questions were comparatively absent from the native speaker group, with only two of the thirty-two entries or 6% containing questions. On top of the low frequency, the questions in the native speaker group were clearly more direct, specifically "Can we have breaks back?" and "Hey Harry, why in the hell did you take away the breaks?" The small number of questions in this group as well as their overwhelming directness certainly make a convincing case for the heavier use of indirect questions in Asian discourse.

Analogies

My research question also stated that I would examine the samples for the presence of analogies as another sign of indirectness. The twenty-seven writing samples from the non-native speaker group did not contain any analogies. The lack of this feature may indicate that the writing samples were too short and that longer samples may have yielded analogies, or that students are less likely to use them in simulated writing samples, such as the survey. Not surprisingly, the native speaker group followed suit and did not utilize any analogies.

According to these linguistic measures, indirect questions appear to be a more popular linguistic device for Asian students writing business letters in English. However, it is impossible to make the same claim for analogies because they were completely absent from the surveys.

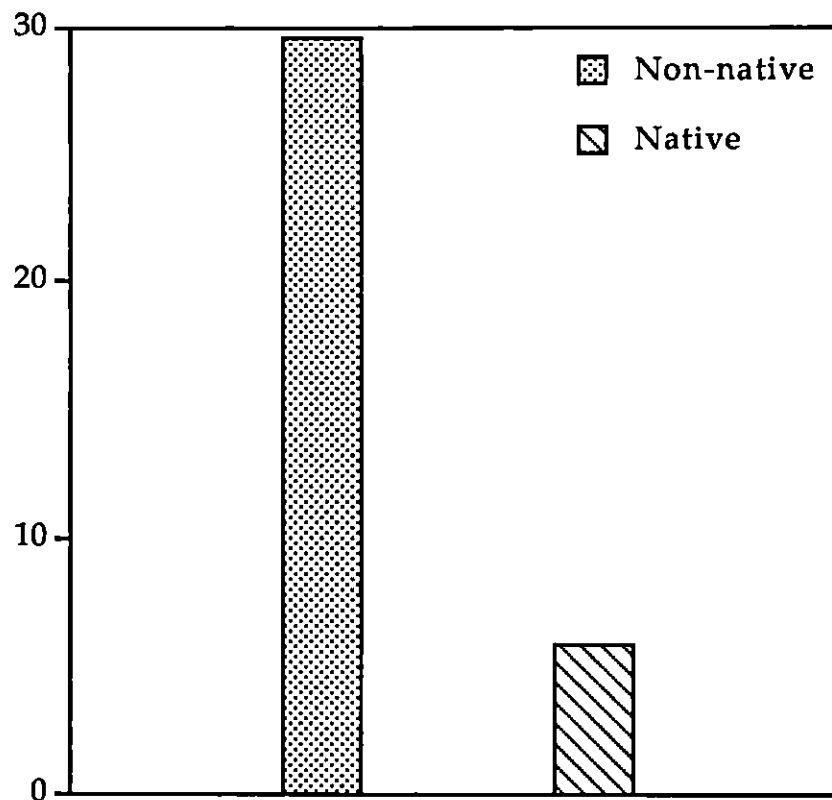


Figure 2. Percentage of participants who asked indirect questions.

Downtoners and Hesitant Language

I tabulated the frequency of the downtoners as defined by Quirk et al. in Chapter 7 and received sparse results. In the non-native speaker group, one letter contained a self-effacing statement, a topic I will develop further in this section, when stating "I'm just one of your employees." Another tried to downplay the significance of breaks to the boss by saying "We need to have a little time to have a break." The students' level of fluency in English may have influenced the small number of downtoners found in this group. While the native speaker group used more downtoners, they did not use significantly more. Six or 18.7% of participants in the native speaker group used downtoners

to soften their messages, including downplaying the amount of time needed for breaks, "the few minutes gained from break," and softening the request to return breaks, "I would ask you to read my concerns, as listed below, and possibly reconsider your decision." Possibly, not on Quirk et al.'s list in Chapter 7, was used by 3 participants. All downtoners found in the entries, those in Quirk et. al's list and the others identified, were counted and tabulated.

However, after I reviewed each letter sample multiple times, it became apparent that participants frequently used other means to express hesitation and did so very consistently. In particular, the participants chose verbs that expressed politeness and deference to authority in the form of "I would like," "I hope," "I wish," "I feel," and "I think". Twenty of the 27 participants or 74% of the non-native speaker group used the above phrases to express an opinion or make a request in the letter samples, with several using one of the above structures more than once. For example, 8 of the participants in this group used "I would like" to begin the main claim of their letter, with 3 stating "I would like to complain" and 3 stating "I would like to provide my opinion" or "I would like to talk about your decision", all bringing the reader to the purpose of the letter while seeming to ask permission to speak. Two other entries begin "I would like you to reconsider" and "I would like you to remove", much more direct methods of communicating requests that, in fact, places the writers in a position of control. Six participants also used the wistful phrases "I hope" and "I wish", each time asking the reader to consider the decision to remove breaks as well as workers' needs. In addition to these marks of hesitation, the participants in the non-native speaker group used several phrases to soften his or her statements or requests, and I will explore these factors in a later section.

While members of the native speaker group made use of the hesitant language as well, they did so less frequently and made verbal choices that contained slightly more strength and less hesitancy. Thirteen of the 32 or 40% of participants surveyed used one or more of the verbs listed above in a letter sample, a difference of 34% from the non-native speaker group. "I feel", "I would like" and "I believe" were the overwhelmingly popular choices, with "I feel" appearing in six entries, "I would like" in five and the stronger "I believe" in four. Only one participant used the wistful "I wish" and another used the somewhat doubtful "It seems". The frequency of "I feel" is important because "I feel" was followed by forceful statements such as "I feel these breaks are imperative," "I feel this is unfair," and "I feel the decision to take away breaks was a poor one."

These findings indicate that downtoners may not be a particularly strong method for judging indirectness in that they may be used in ways that aren't connected to the directness of the claim and give finite rather than open ways to judge hesitancy. The presence of hesitant phrasing, particularly in the non-native speaker samples, seems to indicate that hesitant phrasing in the form of verbs is a popular choice for Asian students writing business letters in English, with 74% versus 40% in the native speaker group using them (see Figure 3).

While these findings are valuable and appear to support my hypothesis that samples from Asian writers will exhibit more signs of indirectness, it is also important to consider features discovered after review of the surveys and not previously identified in the research question. The following findings may provide more insight on the samples because they reflect a deductive, unplanned approach to the data collected for this study.

Additional Findings

Group messages

Quite prominent in the category of additional findings is the prevalence of deference to a group, namely other employees, in the non-native speaker group. In addition to using plural subject or object forms, i.e. "we" or "us" when

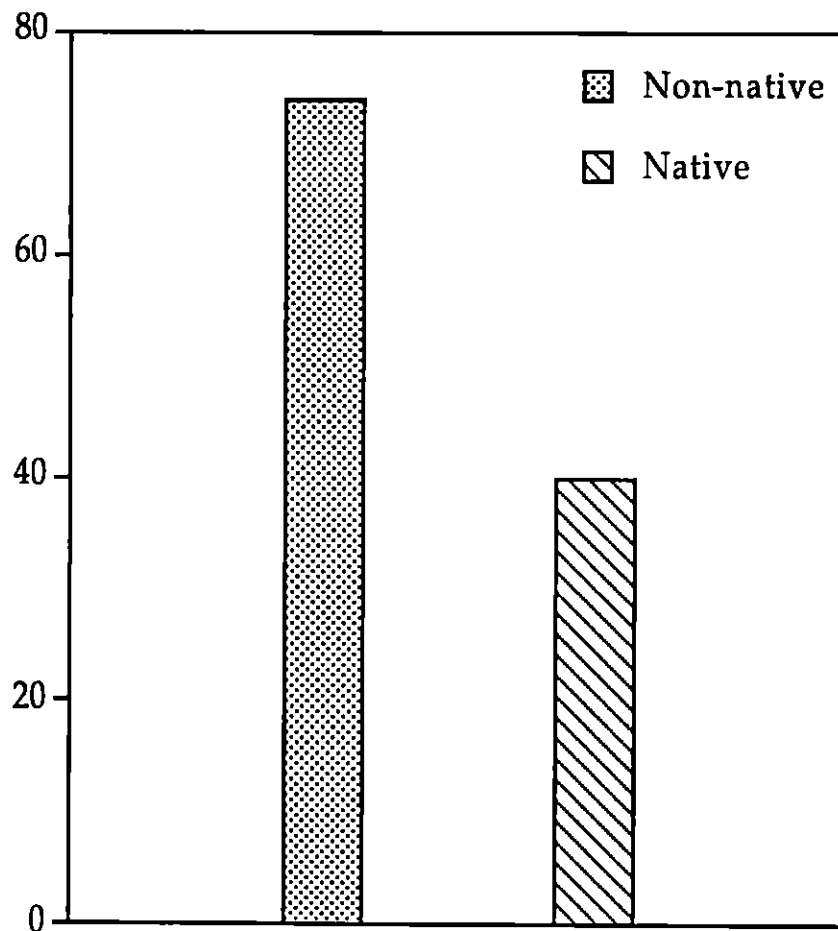


Figure 3. Percentage of participants who used hesitant phrasing in the form of verbs.

phrasing claims, participants who deferred to a group used other employees as a means to strengthen their arguments, often allowing the statement of the group's opinion to overshadow their own. In ten of the twenty-seven entries in this group or 35.7%, participants referred to group sentiment about the removal of breaks. Examples include "I myself and generally all the employees feel upset," "On behalf of all the employees, I would like to complain," and "there are so many employees who don't like your decision."

The prevalence of this feature in the native speaker group was particularly high also, with 12 of the 32 participants surveyed or 37.5% presenting the complaint in the letter as a group message or a message reflecting the group's (all employees affected by the break removal) interests (see Figure 4). Examples in this group include "My co-workers and I were very upset with the change" and by the same writer but responding to the second scenario, "I hate to tell you this, but a lot of us have been complaining about the new break policy. Could we have our breaks back?"

The frequency of this feature in both groups seems to underscore the perceived importance of strength in numbers, or of the importance of the group or other established authority over the self. While writers who referred to group sentiment likely understood that the boss would be swayed by the opinions of a large number of unhappy workers over one, the prevalence of this feature also may indicate that the writers who used this tactic simply didn't feel that their lone opinions were valuable, but could be, however, with support from others. While this theory would seem to apply more to Asian writers, it may also apply to Americans. The substantial number of native speakers who presented a group message, over one-third, is surprising, though it brings the issue of gender into question. Though I did not request that participants specify their gender on the

first page of the survey, the heavy presence of group messages in this collection of samples and the large number of female participants in the native speaker group (which I assume to be at least 60% but did not document during data collection) leads me to consider whether gender influenced the content of the letter samples in terms of group messages. These results would support the relatively common assumption that women's communicative habits are comparatively less aggressive and forward than men's, incorporating many of the qualities of typically Asian discourse that I have described in this study.

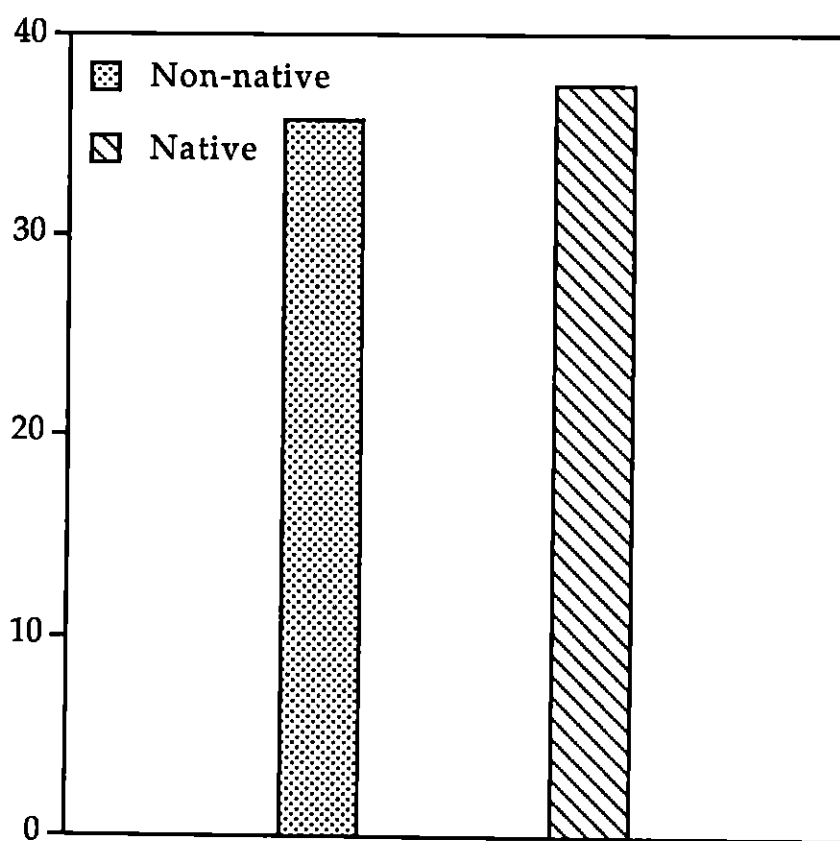


Figure 4. Percentage of participants who used group messages.

Self-effacement

Another feature connected to the issue of deferment and group messages is the presence of self-effacing comments in the letter samples, particularly in the non-native speaker group. Participants making these statements downplayed the significance or worth of their comments, while underscoring the boss' authority. In the non-native speaker sample, 3 of the 27 participants or 11% downplayed their own importance with such phrases as "I know I have no right of doing so, but please consider your decision carefully," "I'm just one of your employees," "I know I have no right to judge your decision" and "I'm just a small employee of your company." One respondent used the second and third examples in his first and second letter samples respectively, while the other two examples were each used in the first letter samples.

Not surprisingly, none of the native speaker samples considered such examples of self-effacement. Though the presence of self-effacing phrases in the non-native speaker sample was small, with one-ninth of all samples exhibiting this trait, it is significant when compared to the total lack of the trait in the native speaker group. The presence of this feature in the non-native speaker group echoes the Asian, particularly Chinese, tendency to regard authoritative texts as more important or valuable than the writer's own voice, as my student did in the introductory sample. The students who used the above phrases may have found it out of character, even unnatural, to present a written complaint in their own voices to a workplace authority figure.

Appeals: legality, guilt, friendship and practicality

While the following section does not specifically pertain to the subject of directness, it is worthy of discussion because it details notable rhetorical trends in

the samples. The participants' usage of appeals reflects how they interpret the audience's needs and priorities, an important component of the writing process. A graph displaying the use of appeals across the two groups is displayed in Figure 5.

Legality

Additional reviews of the samples offered further insight, particularly in the types of appeals writers used to influence the boss to change his or her break policy. Legality was used as an appeal only by the native speaker group, with writers informing the boss that his or her decision was illegal because workers were entitled to breaks by law. While only 4 members or 12.5% of the native speaker group used this appeal, none of the non-native speakers did, thus indicating that cultural knowledge is required to construct an argument using a legal appeal when writing in a second language for native-speaking readers. When writers used legality as an appeal, they used it in all three scenarios, indicating that differences in relationship to the reader were not relevant in the choice of this appeal. Examples of legal appeals include " . . . I received the news that you are planning to cancel morning and afternoon breaks. This action is prohibited by law. State code states that employees must be given a fifteen minute paid break for every four hours they work" and " . . . I believe this decision is unfair as well as possibly illegal. Iowa law states that an employee is entitled to a 15 minute break for every four hours of work." This particular writer began this passage with "As one of your employees," but shifted to "As a friend and one of your employees" when beginning the response to the most familiar audience.

Of the 4 native speakers who used legality as an appeal, only 1 was enrolled in the first-year composition class 105H. The remaining 3 were enrolled

in JLMC 101, and as of Summer Session 1997, the time of the survey, the 3 reported that they had completed their sophomore, junior and senior years of college. While these numbers are not statistically significant, it is reasonable to conclude that because the 3 participants from JLMC 101 were older, they likely had more work experience than students in the 105H class and thus more familiarity with work-related policies.

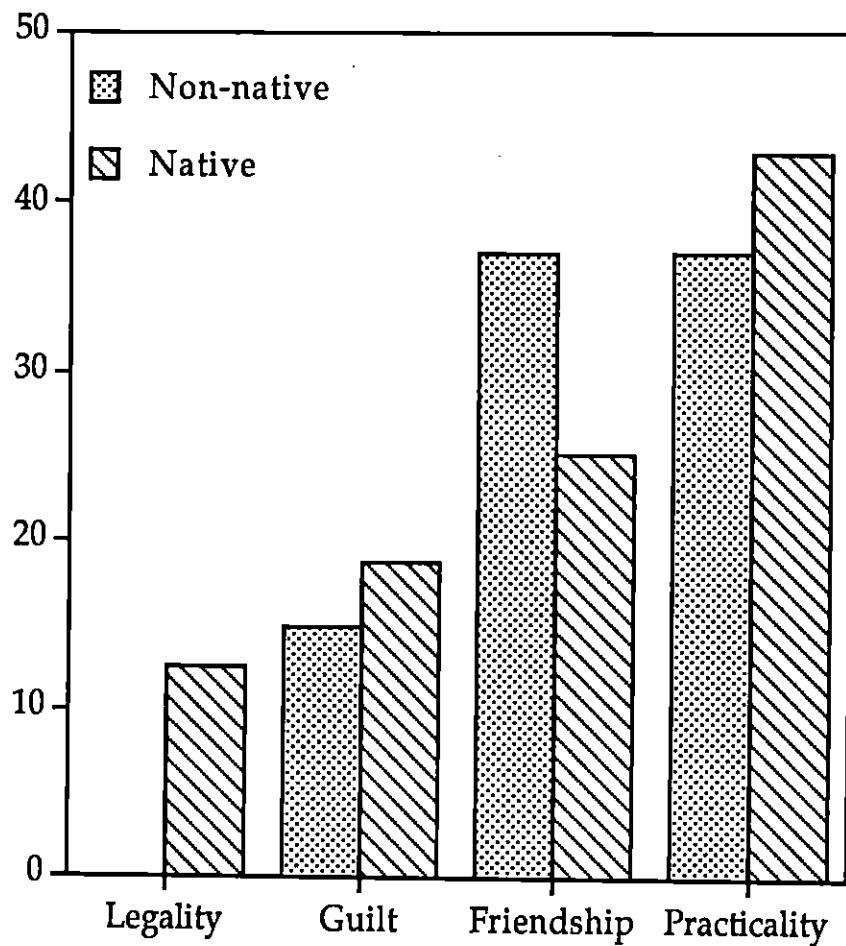


Figure 5. Use of appeals across non-native and native speaker groups

Guilt

Also particular to the native speaker group were appeals based on guilt. All 6 of the participants using guilt as an appeal in the native speaker group (18.7%) used it only in response to the most familiar audience, when writing to the friend promoted to the position of boss. The 6 using this appeal consistently reminded the reader of his/her former position and responsibility to understand working conditions. Examples include "However, do not forget where you started out on the latter of success. Think how you would feel if you were still an employee like us, losing your breaks," "I feel the decision to take away breaks was a poor one. You've been in our shoes so you know how it would feel" and "You remember how unhappy we were if we didn't get breaks on a given day."

Additionally, 4 participants in the non-native speaker group (14.8%) used guilt as an appeal, though their appeals were comparatively less direct. The presence of this feature in the non-native speaker group samples contradicts my assumption that guilt appeals are not likely to exist in letters by Asian writers because they are a sign of close or informal writer/reader relationship. However, the guilt appeals in the non-native speaker group appear more factual and less accusatory than those written by native speakers. Examples include the matter of fact statement "You have already known about the meaning of this time [breaks]," "Dear Sir, as you had work in this area before, you should have know the heavy workload here" and the less accusatory "I hope that you will reconsider the decision since you know the employees' needs better than anyone in the company." As with the native speaker group, the non-native speakers only used guilt appeals in the second scenario. This choice can be seen as both practical, in that that the friend-as-boss was the only audience to have experienced the worker's needs, and rhetorically appropriate in that a guilt

appeal may be regarded as a riskier appeal than others and requires knowledge of the audience to prevent backfiring.

Friendship

Friendship was one of the most popular appeals across both sample groups with 32% of all participants using friendship, flattery or congratulatory statements to appeal to their readers. In the non-native speaker group, 10 or 37% of the participants used friendship to appeal to readers, a margin of 12% over the native speaker group where 25% of all participants used friendship as an appeal. Not surprisingly, the majority of participants used friendship only when communicating with the reader in the most familiar scenario, the friend turned boss. Five participants, including 4 in the non-native speaker group, used friendship as an appeal to more than one audience.

While the percentage of participants in each group using friendship as an appeal is not dramatically different, it is important to consider how writers in each group used friendship as an appeal. In the non-native speaker group, half or 50% of all participants using friendship as an appeal used it for its own sake, congratulating the friend on his or her promotion or flattering the boss on his or her leadership style and then moving on to another topic. However, four of the entries with friendship appeals appeared to have ulterior motives, including encouraging the boss to use break time to develop his or her own friendships with the employees and flattering the boss with assurances that he or she is well liked by employees and that returning breaks will result in appreciative productivity. In the native speaker group, only 2 of the 8 participants using friendship appeared to use it for its own sake. The remaining 6 in this group used friendship as a means to establish a sense of trust and to gain the reader's

empathy. Examples of this latter tactic include "As a friend and one of your employees, I am concerned that you may be confused about Iowa regulations regarding employee breaks" and "As your friend I would like you to reconsider you [sic] decision to do away w/ the lunch breaks."

While the numbers do not offer strong backing for either group's use of friendliness, it is important to recognize that 50% of all participants in the non-native speaker group appeared to use friendliness for its own sake, while 25% of the participants in the native speaker group did so. The higher presence of this feature in the non-native speaker group may be an indicator of politeness' presence as a communicative habit rather than a rhetorical strategy in Asian culture, because politeness as seen in the Asian student examples more often did not expose motives or intentions other than the exchange of friendship.

Practicality

Practicality, showing the reader the practical reasons for keeping breaks, was the most popularly used appeal with 40.6% of all participants incorporating it into their letter samples. Ten participants or 37% in the non-native speaker group and 14 or 43% in the native speaker group used practicality as an appeal, with all but 1 participant including it in the response to the first scenario.

Appeals to practicality took many forms, most often stressing the importance of improved efficiency and worker morale. In the non-native speaker group, practical appeals included increases in worker efficiency and effectiveness and similarly, increased production. Three of the 10 participants using practical appeals phrased the appeal positively, with arguments such as "... short breaks during the working time will increase the efficiency of work and it brings more benefits than having no breaks at all." Six of the 10 phrased

their appeals negatively, citing the consequences of removing breaks, such as reduced efficiency, reduction in product quality and low profits, and one provided both positive and negative practical appeals. One participant even offered a psychological consequence: "If you decide to make this rule of taking away the breaking time, I think, many of employee will lost their will to work for your company."

Though the percentage of participants in the native speaker group using practicality as an appeal was only 6% larger than in the native speaker group, the appeals in the native speaker group contained an interesting and contrasting feature: the presence of "morale". Eight of the 14 participants using practical appeals or 57% cited worker morale as an important reason for maintaining breaks, often drawing a connection between morale and worker productivity. As with the non-native speaker group, the native speakers presented practical appeals both positively and negatively. Eight of the participants phrased the appeals negatively, with statements such as "Employees will suffer from lower morale which will in turn result in lower levels of productivity" and "When morale is down, production and efficiency can also fall." Five phrased the appeals positively, for example "I feel these breaks are needed for the morale of these workers to remain positive", and one participant used both positive and negative approaches.

The high percentage of participants who referred to morale in the native speaker group seems to be an indicator of the importance of job satisfaction in American culture, particularly among this young group of college students. It could also indicate that "morale" is simply a popular term in the United States today. While the non-native speaker group showed evidence that they too valued job satisfaction, productivity was more commonly used as a practical

appeal. However, the references to productivity could in fact be interpreted as efforts to present appeals that the boss would most be influenced by, rather than a marker of cultural difference.

Identical responses to multiple readers

Particularly important in the category of additional findings is the number of participants in both groups who indicated that the responses to the original and least familiar audience should be identical, or with only subtle changes in the salutation and introductory sentence. A number of participants indicated that all three responses should be identical as well. Participants who specified "no changes" to the second and third scenarios apparently determined that the shifts in audience did not necessitate linguistic or rhetorical changes.

In the non-native speaker category, 14 of the 27 participants or 51.8% responded that at least one response (either the response to the most or least familiar audience) should be identical to the first. This percentage included 5 who felt the third response should be identical to the first with no changes, 4 who felt the second and third should be identical with no changes, and 4 who felt the salutation should be changed to "Dear Sir" from "Dear Mr. X" or who desired minor changes in the introductory sentence in the third response (i.e. introducing him or herself to the boss). Another respondent felt that the second response required no changes, but that the third required a minor wording change.

The native speaker group contained a larger percentage of participants who felt one or more responses should remain the same, in fact 78%. Fourteen of the 32 in this group responded that the third response should be identical to the first, 2 responded that the second and third responses should be identical to

the first, and 8 responded that the third response should exhibit only minor changes, including the salutation, identifying him or herself and department, and adding a memo format. One respondent indicated that both the second and third responses required minor changes in the salutation. The distribution of participants specifying "no changes" is displayed in Figure 6.

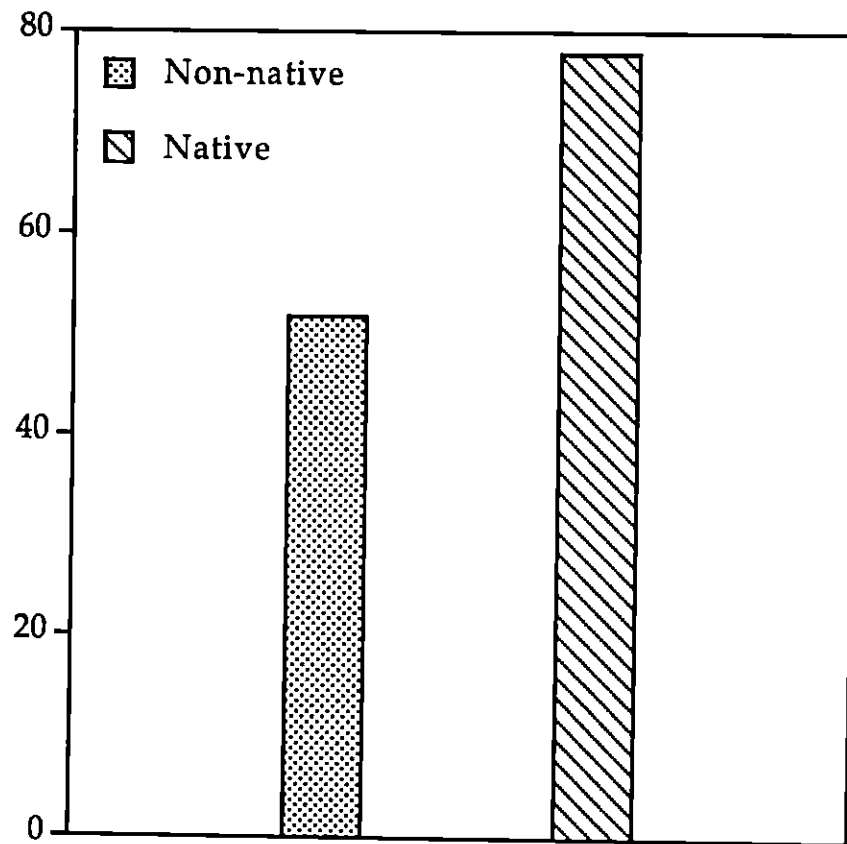


Figure 6. Percentage of participants who specified "no changes" to the most or least familiar audiences, or both.

The finding that roughly 25% more native speakers felt no need to shift one or more responses to accompany differing audiences is particularly significant and contradicts my original assumption that more non-native speakers would indicate "no changes" in the spaces for the second and third responses. I had originally assumed so because non-native speakers on average took at least five minutes longer to complete the survey and also, as the table on pages 66-67 indicates, had substantially less coursework in English overall and thus were likely to exhibit less fluency in writing and comprehending English. Whether the non-native speaker responses were in fact more appropriate for the three different readers is not at issue here; however, a larger percentage of non-native speakers felt that changes to accommodate and influence the three audiences were necessary.

In the final section of this study, I will report on conclusions I have identified, both those pertaining and not pertaining to my originally stated research question. I will then conclude with implications for further study of contrastive rhetoric and its applications to business communication, while identifying points that would have either substantially changed or improved on the results of my study.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings

As the previous chapter indicates, the results of my study do not provide a singular answer to the issue of directness when contrasting Asian and American culture, but rather are mixed and multi-faceted. While the results do not specifically answer which culture offers the most direct complaints to business situations, they do shed valuable light on the issue.

The results of the word count study indicate that native speakers of English exhibit a slightly more direct style of communicating claims in complaint letters according to the word count measure used. However, participants in both groups presented claims that were deceptively direct, in that they began the paragraph with phrases such as "I would like" or "I am writing to you to express my opinion" but did not clearly state the purpose or request for writing until later in the passage. These delayed claims appeared in roughly the same frequency in both sample groups (see Figure 1). While I am not advocating direct approaches over indirect ones, these results would indicate that students intending a direct approach, for example when giving a "good news" message, but using a delayed approach in their writing may need to reconsider rewording their messages for maximum direct effect.

The subject of increased directness for a more familiar audience yielded mixed results as well. In both the native and non-native speaker groups, less than half of the responses became more direct in the second scenario according to the measure of word count before the statement of purpose or the request. In the non-native speaker group, 20% of all responses showed a decrease in directness, while 25% did so in the native speaker group. While level of directness and

level of familiarity appear to have a relationship in this study, it is not a particularly strong one.

Linguistic markers of indirectness such as indirect questions were a much stronger indicator of non-native speaker indirectness. Questions were used almost exclusively by non-native speakers, with 29.6% of non-native speakers and only 6% of native speakers using them (see Figure 2). Further, non-native speaker questions were generally more indirect in tone than those used by native speakers. Analogies, another linguistic marker proposed for measurement, were completely absent from both groups of surveys. This would indicate that analogies were simply not a likely marker of indirectness in this type of communication, or that the samples collected for this study weren't representative of Asian discourse in this respect.

Downtoners were also not a particularly meaningful measure of indirectness, with very few responses in both group containing any downtoners. However, both groups created a sense of hesitation and politeness through their choice of verbs, particularly verbs such as "I would like", "I hope" and "I feel". Nearly 75% of the non-native speaker group used hesitating verbs, while 40% of native speakers did (see Figure 3). This finding reflects the prominence of hesitation, politeness and/or lack of assertiveness in Asian rhetorical practices.

Other findings include the substantial number of group messages, reflecting not only the writer's personal opinion but those of other workers he or she claimed to represent. Roughly one-third of non-native and native speakers used this tactic, a possible indicator of the importance of the group over the self in Asian culture, and a possible indicator of gender influence in the native speaker samples (see Figure 4).

Similar to the previous issue of politeness is the subject of self-effacement in the non-native speaker samples. Though only a small number of samples, 11%, exhibited this trait, it is nonetheless important because it appeared only in the non-native speaker group. Though only on a small level, results indicate that Asian speakers of English as a second language may be likely to directly downplay the importance or significance of their own comments, possibly as a method of showing respect to the boss' authority. Because I did not arrive at conclusive results with this study, self-effacement could prove to be an interesting and fruitful topic for study in the field of contrastive rhetoric.

In addition, participants in the study used a number of appeals to influence their readers, a subject I had not identified as a concern when posing the research question, but significant nonetheless (see Figure 5 for distribution of appeals across groups). A rather small portion, 12.5%, of native speakers used legality as an appeal, though no non-native speakers did, indicating use of this appeal is likely a sign of cultural familiarity. Both non-native and native speakers used guilt as an appeal, though native speakers used more factual and accusatory guilt appeals. Friendship and practicality were the most highly used appeals, with more non-native speakers using friendship for its own sake and stressing increased productivity as a practical reason to keep breaks. Non-native speakers more often used friendship as a strategy to gain reader trust and empathy and stressed employee morale as the most important reason to keep breaks.

A crucial finding in this study is the number of participants who felt that the response to the second and third readers, the most and least familiar audiences, respectively, should be identical to the first response (see Figure 6). This finding indicates that most participants felt the shift in audience was simply

not important or significant enough to require different rhetorical strategies. Substantially more native speakers, 25% more, felt that responses to the least and most familiar audiences required no or very few changes. Though this finding does not indicate whether non-native speakers were making more appropriate rhetorical choices or writing more effective letters to the least familiar audience, it does indicate that non-native speakers show greater sensitivity to subtle changes in audience.

The results of my study of audience sensitivity, while not conclusive, could lead to interesting avenues of study. To truly gauge a sense of participants' sensitivity to audience, a researcher could interview participants following a survey to gain a clearer sense of why they made the rhetorical choices they did, or could observe and record participants as they offer verbal protocols during the survey process.

Implications for Teaching

The findings on audience sensitivity indicate that native speakers of English, in particular, need to develop a stronger sense of the subtleties that distinguish audiences from one another. While writing to a friend promoted to the position of boss may create opportunities for personal reference, humor, and even appeals based on guilt, the least familiar boss, an individual the writer had never met, requires careful consideration, much like the writer Maddy in Elizabeth Huettman's article engages in. Though I did not specify the whereabouts of the least familiar audience, he or she may conceivably have been in a foreign country, a situation that would have required an even greater level of understanding on the writer's part to meet the reader's expectations.

When writing to an unfamiliar audience such as the one featured in the survey, writers need to question the reader's level of familiarity with the context, the reader's expectations in terms of politeness and deference to authority, and the purpose of the document, essentially whether the document could reasonably accomplish its goals considering its audience and context. Though conceptions of audience are to some degree individual, business writing instructors have an opportunity to better acquaint inexperienced writers with these rhetorical concepts, thus preparing them for the expectations they will face as working professionals.

Teaching audience, as I have experienced, is not a simple task. Teachers of international business communication are additionally challenged by the fact that students have very little familiarity with the audience they are writing to, multiplying the difficulty of the task. The results of my study indicate that students could benefit from role-playing exercises, where they are asked to imagine themselves in the role of a Chinese businessperson, for example. Teaching materials such as profiles of a typical Chinese business person's values, habits, and expectations could be shared with students (with an effort to avoid excessive stereotypes and generalizations), followed by examples of (fictional, or if possible, true examples) of business letters written by Americans. Students could then be asked to place themselves in the position of the Chinese reader, and to project, in a sense, how he or she would interpret the document, based on details taken from the profile. Particularly obvious examples would benefit students' level of understanding; for example, the letters from American writers could contain highly direct requests, or excessive use or a complete lack of politeness strategies, such as those identified in this study, namely indirect questions, downtoners, or hesitating verbs.

In addition, the changing population of American university classrooms necessitates including Asian as well as possibly Latino and African and African-American rhetorical strategies in business writing textbooks. While business writing textbooks, such as those I described in the section entitled "Textbook Reviews" in Chapter 1, advocate which strategies effective writers should use, writers, particularly those from cultures with different rhetorical practices, often don't follow these guidelines. However, individuals from different rhetorical traditions are joining American educational and corporate settings at increasingly rapid rates, and all students and writers could benefit from knowledge of different rhetorical practices. This knowledge could be invaluable when teaching, writing or reading documents composed by writers of different rhetorical traditions, to gain greater cultural and personal understanding and forge stronger personal and professional relationships.

Aside from audience, my study highlights the possibility that rhetorical appeals such as legality, guilt, friendship and practicality and the strategy of self-effacement are culturally anchored. For example, only American participants used legality as an appeal, more often referred to "worker morale" when using practical appeals, and never used the strategy of self-effacement. Asian participants used less direct guilt appeals, seemed to use friendship for the sake of being friendly rather than as a rhetorical strategy, and stressed productivity over worker morale when using practical appeals. While culturally based strategies could, again, certainly be used as a means to better assess international audiences' needs and expectations, they may also be used as an interesting tool to better explore our own cultural practices and belief systems. For example, what might the heavy reference to worker morale reflect about the values of American workers, particularly young, college-educated Americans soon to head into the

work force? Why might Americans stress the importance of legal work practices? Why might Americans seem to have ulterior motives for friendship, such as establishing trust? Young, American students with limited cultural experience may in fact gain much from examining and questioning the values represented in their own rhetorical strategies when compared to those from other rhetorical traditions.

Implications for Further Study

Some findings, as previously discussed, illuminated additional possibilities for study that could have added substantially to my findings. The frequency of hesitant phrasing, particularly in the form of verbs, led me to consider how gender may have influenced the results of this study. As I previously mentioned, I mentally noted the high number of female students participating in the native speaker group and thus suspected that gender may have played a role. However, to truly analyze the role of gender in the results, I would have needed to include a request for the participants to identify themselves according to gender on the survey and tabulated the results accordingly. A possible and interesting research study could investigate which factor most strongly influences indirect communication: linguistic and cultural fluency or gender. Such a study would provide the opportunity to measure and compare the level of directness in business documents written by Asian men and American women and to determine whether culture and gender play similar roles in influencing rhetorical and linguistic practices.

Because of the limits of time and other necessary resources, I was not able to obtain a large group of Chinese students to participate in this study. The majority of non-native speakers were Asian, but from a variety of countries,

including China, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia and Japan. To truly understand Chinese rhetorical practices, a future study of this subject would require larger sample groups and a higher percentage of Chinese students participating, preferably the entire non-native speaker group. Though many of the students from Malaysia, Taiwan and Indonesia reported speaking Chinese as their native language, this factor does not discount that they come from distinct cultures that appear similar only to outsiders. The cultural differences these students brought to the study may have had some role in influencing results.

My observations of students completing surveys and assessments of their writing samples leads me to conclude that a future study of this subject should also ask that students complete an entire business letter, rather than writing opening paragraphs of three different letters. I observed that many students, particularly, the non-native speakers, seemed pressed for time to complete the survey which may have resulted in shorter entries or entries that reflected less careful thought. A single complete letter sample would not only allow students to devote time to one writing task but would also provide an opportunity to study how participants address their concerns in the body of the letter and how they conclude the message.

The number of native speakers using legality as an appeal, though not significant, brought another issue to light: work experience. Though the Sims' and Guice study cited in the literature review discusses the importance of experience with the target culture when making appropriate rhetorical choices, it does not consider the even more specific issue of context. Participants' own experience with workplace culture and bosses could very well have shaped their responses, though the survey did not ask that they report on their work experiences. While participants were asked to specify the last year of school

completed on the first page of the survey, they were not asked to give their ages, a factor that could also have influenced responses. Though the majority of students surveyed in the study appeared to be college age, approximately eighteen to twenty-three years old, life as well as work experience could possibly have influenced results.

Because the number of Asian students surveyed for this study was rather small, I was not able to arrive at conclusive results or to make definitive statements about indirectness in business writing by Asian second language writers. In many ways, the results of this study involve describing and identifying rhetorical and linguistic issues for further study. However, even if conclusive results were found, it is important to remember that an entire culture's communicative practices should not be generalized by the results of one study. Rather than generalize that all Asians are less direct than Americans, it is more valuable to consider how indirectness might surface, if at all, in their communication. I have identified possible areas for further investigation in the form of word count before claims, indirect questions, group messages, self-effacing strategies, and different uses of rhetorical appeals.

Most importantly, this study has led me to conclude that though directness in Asian discourse is an interesting point of study, it is a starting point. Not only did I uncover intriguing details as I moved beyond the topic of directness, I also understood that there is far more to be uncovered. I hope this study will be of benefit to those seeking to further explore the area of intercultural business communication and its accompanying linguistic and rhetorical landscape.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

August 27, 1997

Dear _____ students:

The following survey is part of my thesis research on business letter writing. It asks for general biographical information and for three short letter samples on the second page. Please take 20-25 minutes to complete it.

To insure confidentiality, your survey will only be identified according to your class, and your responses will remain completely anonymous. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You will not be penalized if you decline from participating.

Thank you for your assistance with my study,

Danelle Baker
Graduate Student in English

Survey

Is English your native language? **yes/no** (circle one). If **yes**, go on to Section II. If **no**, complete Section I before going on to Section II.

Section I

1. What is your native language? _____
2. How many years have you lived in the United States? _____
3. How many years of instruction in English have you had? _____

Section II

1. What is your major? _____
2. Name the English courses you have taken in high school and college.

High school:

College:

3. Circle the last year of formal education you have completed.

Senior year in high school/ final year of secondary school

College: **freshman** **sophomore** **junior** **senior**

4. What kind of experience have you had writing business letters (in any language)? Circle all that apply.

- Writing to request college/university application information
- Writing to apply for jobs
- Writing to complain about a product or service
- Writing letters as part of a job task
- Writing other business letters. For example:

Section III

1. Imagine that you work for a large company with five hundred employees. Assume that you have met your boss but don't know him well. Your boss has decided to take away employees' morning and afternoon breaks. You are upset with his decision and decide to complain about it to him in a letter. Write the opening paragraph of such a letter.

2. Now, assume your boss is a friend who has recently been promoted into his position. How would your opening paragraph be different? If you would make changes, rewrite two sentences that reflect these changes.

3. Now, assume you have never met your boss and that his office is in another location. How would this opening paragraph be different? If you would make changes, rewrite two sentences that reflect these changes.

APPENDIX 2: DATA TABLES

Table 1. Non-native Speaker Demographics^a

	Number ^b	Percent ^b
Native Language/Culture		
Malaysian	8	28.5
Indonesian	7	25
Korean	4	14.2
Japanese	2	7
Taiwanese	2	7
Thai	1	3.5
Vietnamese	1	3.5
Comoran	1	3.5
Ugandan	1	3.5
Swedish	1	3.5
Years Lived in the United States		
Less than one year	15	53
One to two years	8	28
Two to years	3	10.7
Years of Instruction in English		
Less than one year	1	3.5
Three to five years	4	14.2
Five and half to nine years	15	53
Ten to fourteen years	5	17.8
Majors		
Computer Science/MIS	8	28.5
Engineering	7	25
Marketing/Mgmt./Finance	6	21.4
Architecture	2	7
Miscellaneous	4	14.2
<u>(Food Science, Psychology, etc.)</u>		

^aN=28^bTotal number and percentage values don't equal 28 and 100, respectively, due to non-responses.

Table 1. (continued)

	Number ^b	Percent ^b
Number of English Classes Completed		
One class	4	14.2
Two classes	13	46
Three to seven classes	3	10.7
Last Year of Formal Education Completed		
Senior yr. high school or		
Freshman year college	20	71
Sophomore year	3	10
Junior year	1	3.5
Senior year	3	10
Letter Writing Experience		
One type	13	46.4
Two types	7	25
Three types	8	28.5

Table 2. Native Speaker Demographics^a

	Number ^b	Percent ^b
Majors		
Engineering	7	21.8
English/Journalism Communication	5	15.6
Computer Science	4	12.5
Science	3	9.3
Psychology	3	9.3
History/Philosophy	3	9.3
Arts	3	9.3
Education	2	6
Liberal Arts	1	3.1
Undecided	1	3.1
Number of English Classes Completed		
One to three	8	25
Four to Six	24	75
Last Year of Formal Education		
Senior yr. high school or Freshman year college	23	71
Sophomore year	2	6
Junior year	3	9.3
Senior year	4	12.5
Letter Writing Experience		
One type	6	18.7
Two types	10	31
Three types	7	21
Four types	4	12.5

^aN=32^bTotal number and percentage values don't equal 32 and 100, respectively, due to non-responses.

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